

NURSE STAFFING

What are “nursing care hours”?

Nursing Care Hours per Patient Day (NHPPD) refers to the number of hours of nursing care provided on a hospital unit, compared to the number of patients on that unit during a 24-hour period. This measure was developed by the American Nurses Association for the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators (NDNQI). “Nursing care hours” are the number of hours worked by nursing staff that have direct patient care responsibilities for more than 50% of their shift.

- Total nursing care hours include hours worked by registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical and vocational nurses, licensed nurse’s aides, and mental health technicians.
- RN nursing care hours include hours worked by RNs.

What are “patient days”?

“Patient days” are the daily average of the number of patients on the unit, as counted at least once during each shift for 24 hours.

Should the results of this measure be compared between hospitals?

There are some very important reasons why hospitals should not be compared to each other for this measure:

- The results are not adjusted to account for factors that might require more nursing care hours (e.g. age of patients, severity of patient illnesses).
- The measure does not account for hospital differences in physical layout, frequency of admissions and discharges, or other factors that might impact nurse staffing needs.
- There are no published national averages or standards with which to compare the Vermont results. In the future, data will be comparable over time for each individual hospital as more months of data become available.